

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A37NEW YORK TIMES
21 September 1986

O.S.S. LIVES AGAIN AT SPIES' REUNION

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20 — Max Corvo, in town with 100 friends who are reliving the most exciting time of their lives, looked into a display case at one of the tools of his former trade. It was labeled "Fairbairn/Sykes dagger."

"I use it today for opening letters," Mr. Corvo said of his own dagger at his home in Middletown, Conn. He was a World War II spy, a member of the Office of Strategic Services, and spies had to learn how to use daggers.

Asked whether he ever had to use his dagger on a spy mission, Mr. Corvo said, "Yes." And then he smiled and explained that he did not use it on an enemy but to cut loose a rubber boat in an attempt to sneak a group of spies into Sardinia.

Stories were exchanged, friendships renewed and some differences flared again as the old spies gathered at the Mayflower Hotel Friday and today to pay homage to the founder of the O.S.S., Gen. William J. Donovan, who died in 1959.

They heard talks by O.S.S. comrades who stayed in the dark trade, including William J. Casey, the current Director of Central Intelligence; William E. Colby and Richard Helms, two former heads of the Central Intelligence Agency, which succeeded the O.S.S., and Ray S. Cline, a former Deputy Director of the C.I.A.

For Some, a First Meeting

Some participants mourned absent friends. Some embraced old comrades. Some met colleagues for the first time because, as Mr. Colby said in a speech, "We were so compartmentalized that most of us didn't know each other."

Several high-ranking officials said Gen. Douglas MacArthur kept the O.S.S. out of the Pacific theater so he would not have to share any glory. It was agreed that J. Edgar Hoover kept the O.S.S. out of Latin America so the Federal Bureau of Investigation could be the sole spy agency there, but the MacArthur story was contradicted.

"We did have a Pacific operation," said John V. Zuckerman, a professor of management in Houston who had been an O.S.S. propagandist. He set up a radio on Saipan that broadcast music and antiwar messages to Japan.

Queens-Midtown Basic Training

Kenneth Molloy, now a judge on Long Island, had to disguise a patrol boat as a Japanese fishing boat, to sail it into a Japanese harbor and blow it up, taking with it a tunnel under the harbor.

A way had to be found to ascertain when the boat was directly over the tunnel, Judge Molloy said, and it was discovered that the Queens-Midtown Tunnel could be a twin of the Japanese tunnel. The equipment was being loaded on a ship in Newark as the war ended.

David Brodie took a communications crew into China by way of Burma. "I had an engineering officer who was an expert in explosives," he said. He instructed the engineer to erect a transmission tower in "a rice paddy that had been lubricated with night dew for centuries."

The engineer, he said, decided to blast a hole for the transmitter pole by using a metal pipe with explosive in it, a bangalore torpedo. "If it didn't have the proper consistency before the explosion, it sure didn't afterward," Mr. Brodie said. The blast made the pole block the road and covered him with a film of what had been in the rice paddy.

The first blocked car carried General Donovan. Mr. Brodie said the general remarked, "Brodie, I'd ask you to come closer, but I can't stand it."

"It was a lot of fun," Mr. Brodie said.

Scout Handbook Is the O.S.S.

Dan Pinck brought with him to the O.S.S. a Boy Scout handbook that a neighbor in Bethesda, Md., had assured him would be helpful anywhere. "I was given millions of dollars and a crate of condoms to give to Chinese leaders," he said. "I didn't even know what they were for." At the time he was 18 years old.

He was told to send back a map showing Japanese emplacements in a Chinese town, but he did not know how to draw a map, and so he turned to the Scout manual. It had map-making instructions, and, using "Getting to Mrs. Nestor's Farm" Mr. Pinck carried out his order.

Angelo Lygizos, who runs a restaurant in San Jose, Calif., and was born in Greece, wound up in the O.S.S. because General Donovan wanted people who spoke foreign languages. "We trained at the Congressional Country Club," Mr. Lygizos said, referring to a club just outside Washington. "We learned how to kill people with a knife."

Did you kill people? he was asked. "Oh, yes," he answered. "Oh, yes."

Sitting It Out in Ireland

Martin Quigley, a movie newspaper publisher from Larchmont, N.Y., did not have to kill anyone. He spent much of the war as the only American spy in neutral Ireland, in case it was invaded; and he is just now discussing his role. "Our State Department still feels that anything that deals with neutral governments had to be handled delicately," he said.

Peppino Puleo, a retired Detroit police detective, recalled the Sardinia operation Mr. Corvo had mentioned.

"We were captured by the Italians two days later," he said. The capture made the Axis fear an invasion of Sardinia and so two of its divisions there when the United States and Britain were invading Sicily.